Pollution deaths

†1173. DR. GYAN PRAKASH PILANIA: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether report of World Health Organisation has stated that around five lakh persons are killed every year in the country due to the pollution caused by burning of wood, coal and dung in rural areas and most of them are women and children;

(b) whether the country accounts for 80 per cent of the six lakh premature deaths that occur in this part of Asia annually due to exposure to such pollutants;

(c) if so, the estimate of Government thereto; and

(d) the steps being taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. ANBUMANI RAMADOSS): (a) to (d) World Health Organisation's report 'Indoor Air Pollution — National burden of diseases estimates' mentions that in India, around 4.07 lakh premature deaths can be attributed annually to use of biomass fuel and coal. According to a report of Indira Gandhi Institute for Development Research, it is estimated that 4.1 lakh to 5.7 lakh women and young children die prematurely every year due to indoor air pollution caused by burning of bio-fuels in poorly ventilated homes. However, no conclusive data is available to establish the correlation between the mortality and indoor air pollution.

The Government through the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy has taken various steps to control and prevent indoor air pollution, through National Programme on Biogas Development to provide alternatives to burning firewood, agricultural residues, cattle dung and coal as fuel. National Programme on Improved Chulhas has been taken up to promote thermally efficient and low smoke stoves/smokeless chulhas. IEC activities through electronic and print media are undertaken to give publicity to the programmes. Women Education programmes are also organized in villages to generate awareness about the hazards of burning firewood, agricultural wastes, cattle dung in traditional chulhas and benefits of the biogas technology etc.

Dryland farming system

1174. DR. GYAN PRAKASH PILANIA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the genesis and objective of enhancing sustainability of dryland farming systems;

(b) what has been achieved, so far;

(c) whether Government has extended scheme to the desert land of Rajasthan; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) The National Common Minimum Programme (NCMP) of the Government emphasized for introduction of a special programme for arid and semi-arid regions of the country. In pursuance, the Ministry of Agriculture formulated a Central Sector Scheme on 'Enhancing Sustainability of Dryland Farming Systems to address the problems of farmers of rainfed dryland areas.

(b) to (d) In view of the recently launched 'National Rainfed Area Authority (NRAA)', the scheme of Enhancing Sustainability of Dryland Farming Systems' has been merged with the

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.